"That brownest of brown studies": The work of the editors and in-house staff of the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1903

Peter Gilliver

The fact that the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) took as its raw material the millions of quotation slips supplied by its readers is well known. The fact that these slips were to some extent pre-processed by a team of volunteer sub-editors, working out of house and in advance of the four editors, is less well known, but is referred to in some of the fuller descriptions of the project.[1] The fact that the four editors had assistants working alongside them, and presumably playing some part in the transformation of quotation slips into finished dictionary entries, must be apparent to anyone who has seen their names listed in the OED's prefatory matter, in third place after the lists of readers and sub-editors; and of course a few of these shadowy figures can be seen in the background of some of the well-known photographs of James Murray in his Scriptorium (see Figure 1).[2] But nobody seems to have discussed the work of the assistants, or how they interacted with the editors, in any detail since 1928, when Charles Onions, the fourth editor of the OED, wrote an anonymous account, which appeared in Oxford University Press's magazine *The Periodical* as part of

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[1] See especially Knowles (2000). I am grateful to Elizabeth Knowles for her comments on an earlier version of this article.

[2] All figures, as listed at the end of this article, as well as material from the Oxford University Press archives and the OED offices are reprinted here by permission of the Secretary to the Delegates of Oxford University Press.

Figure 1
James Murray in his Scriptorium at Mill Hill. The date of this photograph is uncertain, but it predates Murray's move to Oxford in 1885.

a long article celebrating the completion of the first edition. In this article I hope to present a snapshot of this component of the OED's compilation process, taking as an arbitrary focus the year 1903, exactly 100 years ago.

It might be thought that if a sub-editor had done his or her work properly, then all that an assistant would need to do to the sub-edited material for any given word would be to make a selection of the quotations available, for each sense identified by the sub-editor, to look over the definitions, perhaps making corrections to bring them into line with "house style," and then to pass the resulting pile of slips to the editor for final editing. Of course, choosing which quotations to include, and which to leave out, already gives the assistants an important role in shaping the text; it was explicitly not the job of sub-editors to make this kind of selection, and so the assistants would be the first to attempt this, even if some of their selections were subsequently overruled by their editor. But the bundles of slips from which the first round of OED proofs was typeset, now kept in the archives of Oxford University Press (OUP), show that the assistants did far more than this.

In these bundles there are quotation slips and the so-called "topslips" that carry the definitions and other editorial text. Figure 2 shows a fairly typical example of a "topslip" from the hand of one of James Murray's senior assistants, a Cambridge mathematics graduate called Arthur Maling who had joined the project in 1886. The subject of his degree might seem surprising, but in fact very few of the assistants had formal academic language qualifications. Onions explains that "experience has shown that such training is not so important for much of the work as other qualities, more particularly a sense of method, wide general knowledge, and an interest in some special department of the manifold details which have constantly to be attended to" (Onions and others 1928, 14). Maling remained with the dictionary until its completion in 1928, when his contribution was recognized by the award of an honorary M. A. from Oxford University.

We can learn a number of things from this topslip. One useful piece of information is the date-stamp, which indicates when this particular bundle of slips was delivered to the printer. The section or "fascicle" of the OED containing the entry for *palaeothere* was published in March 1904, but it is evident from the date-stamp that it was passed for press eight months earlier, which gives some idea of the time needed
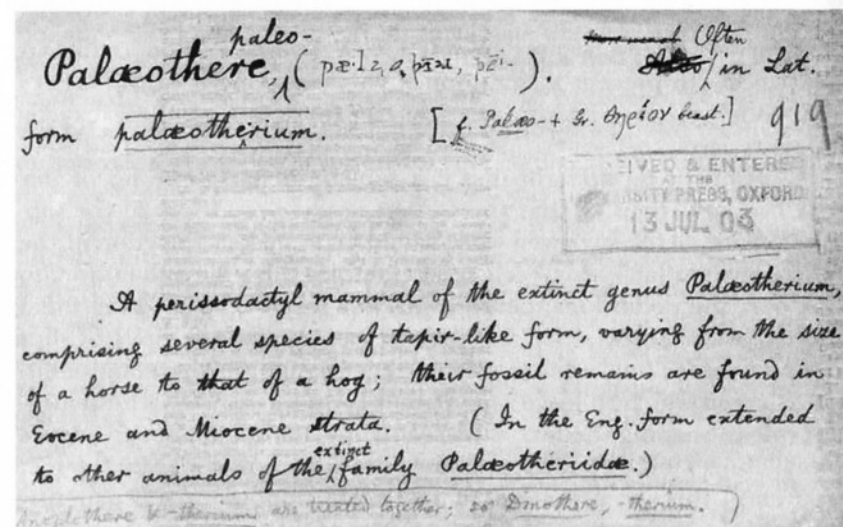

Figure 2
Topslip for the OED entry for **Palæothere**.

to read and correct the various rounds of proofs. We can also see that the etymology is in a different hand; Maling would often write etymologies himself, but in this case he left it blank to be filled in by James Murray. He has also noted at the bottom of the slip — presumably for Murray's benefit — two other OED entries which he has used as a precedent for dealing with two different spellings of the word in the same entry.

But one of the striking questions about this slip is why, if a sub-editor has worked on these words in advance, is the slip largely in Maling's handwriting? Like many of Maling's topslips, this one is written on the back of a scrap of discarded proof, leaving no indication of whether the sub-editor who worked on the material before him provided anything by way of a definition. Quite often, however, evidence of the sub-editor's work does survive. For example, for the word *magnifico* a draft "topslip" was provided by the extremely long-serving and experienced sub-editor Joseph Brown (see Figure 3a). Brown, who was a schoolmaster in Kendal, had been working for the dictionary for decades; he initially sub-edited the *Ma-* material in the 1880s, and then re-sub-edited it in the 1890s. His topslip shows that, as well as suggesting an etymology, he has subdivided the quotation evidence, grouping some of it together under the definition designated by him as sense 1.
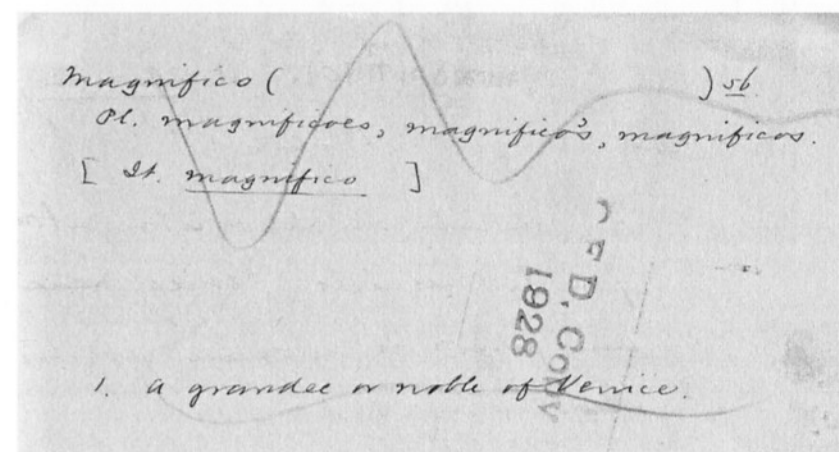

Figure 3 (A)
Topslip for the OED entry for **Magnifico**, showing (a) draft version by Joseph Brown (B, overleaf) revised version, written on the verso of Brown's slip.

And yet, when this material came to be dealt with by a member of Henry Bradley's team, he turned it over (Figure 3b) and wrote a new version of the topslip which shows that he had come to significantly different conclusions about the word. This particular assistant, a former museum curator called James Dallas, had only joined Henry Bradley's staff in 1902; and yet even such a new recruit was permitted to make extensive changes. He has combined Brown's separate senses into one, and his definition uses quite different wording. The etymology in this case is much as Brown wrote it (with a cross-reference added later by Bradley), but the pronunciation — in the OED's own phonetic system — is written in by Dallas. In fact, in 1903, all three of the chief editors were quite happy for their assistants not merely to rewrite a sub-editor's definitions, but also if necessary to devise a new sense-structure for a word which effectively ignored anything the sub-editor had come up with. Many sub-editors' slips do survive, but as far as the topslips which were eventually passed for press are concerned, I would estimate that 90% or more of them were written by a member of the in-house staff — and a large proportion of these by the assistants rather than by the editors.

To put the year 1903 in context: by this time there were over twenty in-house lexicographers working in Oxford, in three separate editorial teams. Some worked with James Murray in his Scriptorium in the garden of 78 Banbury Road, while the rest worked with either Henry Bradley or William Craigie, whose shared office was situated
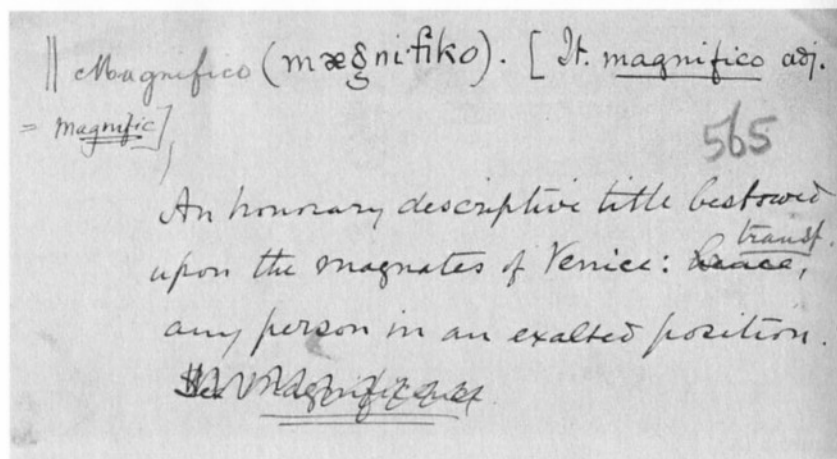

Figure 3 (B)

about a mile away from Murray's Scriptorium, in what became known as the "Dictionary Room" in the Old Ashmolean (Figure 4). This is the place that was later described as "that great dusty workshop, that brownest of brown studies" — the description is from the obituary of Bradley written in 1923 by J. R. R. Tolkien, another former assistant.[3] Craigie's staff in 1903 were on the whole less experienced, as was Craigie himself, who at this point had only been an independent editor for two years. In fact, he was still "staffing up" his team, and took on several people on trial during the year.

Publication of the dictionary had by this stage settled into a relatively steady routine, with one fascicle appearing every quarter. The

Figure 4
Interior view of the Old Ashmolean, probably taken around 1915. William Craigie is seated on the far right; Henry Bradley is seated to the left of Craigie (with a book open on his lap), and Charles Onions is visible between them two desks further back. In the centre of the photograph, seated at the back of the room, is Henry Bayliss (see p. 60); most of the other assistants shown cannot be identified.

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[3]See Tolkien (1923). A fuller account of Tolkien's work on the OED in 1919–20 is given in Gilliver (1995).

fascicles published during 1903 were for parts of the letters L, O, and R, but we know from the printer's date-stamps that the in-house staff completed the bulk of their work on entries months before publication. Using these date-stamps, I have established that Murray's team began the year 1903 with the word *over* and all of its hundreds of compounds, and ended it with the word *paramour*; Bradley's team started with *love* and finished in the middle of *mal-*; and Craigie's team worked on the range from *rani* to *recover*. Some of this material was not actually published until late 1904. In terms of published pages, it was Bradley and his team who were most productive during 1903, with nearly 180 pages of text, about 10% more than Murray, with Craigie's team managing 130 pages. However, the account books show that this doesn't necessarily indicate that Bradley's team was the fastest: several of Murray's assistants were regularly paid for work done to the copy produced by the other editorial teams — apparently in the area of bibliographical standardization, such as making sure that short-titles were given in the approved form in quotations, which was something in which some of the more experienced assistants were particularly expert — and Murray himself still felt it incumbent upon him to look carefully over Craigie's work and give him detailed advice.[4] I shall be returning to a notorious example of this later.

The work of the assistants, and the sub-editors and editors too for that matter, is largely anonymous: they hardly ever put their initials on a slip, let alone sign it. But letters and other documents in the OED archives make it possible to establish the identity of various hands. The slip shown in Figure 5, for example, is the work of George Frederic Holley Sykes, a former schoolmaster who had joined the staff in 1885 and who had been assisting Bradley since Murray recommended him in 1887. His draft definition of *malacology* is written on the back of an earlier version by the sub-editor Joseph Brown, which again he has reworded. However, Sykes is evidently unsure how he should end the definition: the words "or say" (written in red in the last line of the slip) separate two slightly differing ways of contrasting *malacology* with *conchology*, which Sykes has offered to Bradley as alternatives, while wondering whether either is really "?wanted." (In fact Bradley, or possibly someone else, has deleted both options.) There are a great many slips

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[4]Information here is obtained from copies of OED accounts made by Ada Murray (wife of James) and kept with the Murray papers in the Bodleian Library.
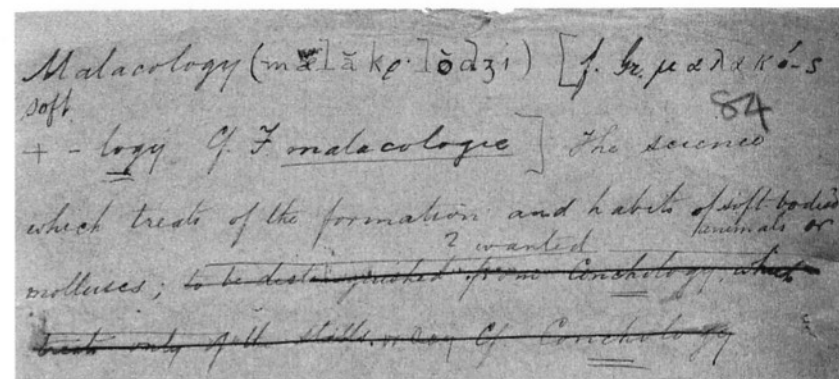
Figure 5
Topslip for the OED entry for **Malacology**.

like this, on which we can see a written counterpart of the kind of dialogue that must have been going on verbally all the time.

The interplay of editorial voices is rather more complex on the pair of slips shown in Figure 6. The topslips for the word *pancake* were originally written by Henry Rope, a young man who joined Murray's staff in the summer of 1903, having graduated from Christ Church
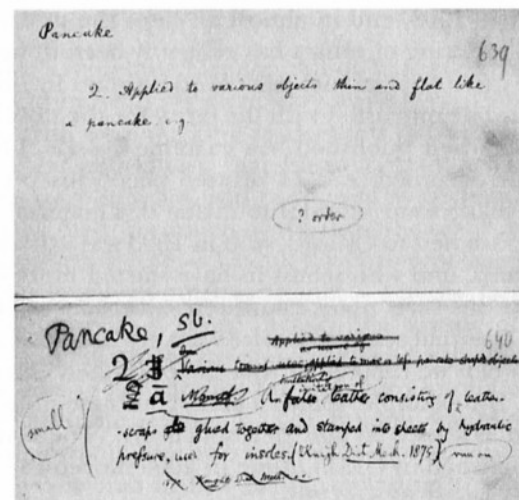
Figure 6
Topslips for part of the OED entry for **Pancake**.

only the previous year, and who remained involved with the OED for the next three-quarters of a century: as Father Rope, he sent in his last batch of quotations in the late 1970s, and my colleagues and I are constantly keying them in in the course of our editorial work. As part of Henry Rope's initial training, his work seems to have been reviewed by Arthur Maling; here Maling has made some initial alterations in pencil, but subsequently decided to rework the text introducing sense 2 of *pancake* on a separate slip. Murray himself has made a further small change, substituting "an imitation of leather" for "a false leather." The changes of sense number are entirely typical of even a relatively simple word like *pancake*. Interestingly, Murray's alterations are not the last layer of editing on this slip: there are some subsequent alterations by Charles Balk, who like Sykes had joined the staff in 1885, and whom it seems Murray regarded as exceptionally good at finding ways of compressing the text on the printed page. Here Balk's instructions to the typesetter to set some of the text in small type, and to run on without a line break to the next slip, will have saved a precious line or two: the editors were always under pressure to save space wherever possible.

Pancake is of course a relatively straightforward word: in the published entry there were only three main numbered senses. But even with much more complex words, the assistants played a major role in deciding on the arrangement and content of entries. I have looked at the copy for most of the larger entries sent to press by Murray and Bradley in 1903, and in almost all cases the initial drafting of definitions and ordering of senses has evidently been done by an assistant — in some cases even an inexperienced assistant like Henry Rope, who was for example entrusted with the entry for the noun *pan*, which ran to 11 senses when published. An extreme case is the verb *make*, which eventually occupied over 11 printed pages. Joseph Brown, the sub-editor, did make some attempt to divide this material into senses, but it was then assigned to Onions, who in 1903 was working as one of Bradley's assistants, and who seems to have started more or less from scratch. Some of his early notes about sense-division survive (see Figure 7), but the eventual sense-structure was very different from this — not surprising when we remember that the published entry contained 96 main senses. For example, senses 9 and 10 in these notes were eventually published as senses 36 and 29 respectively. (The revised version of this entry published in OED Online in 2000 moved the senses even further apart, to senses 62 and 26.)

The entry for *make* is interesting in another respect, namely because some of the preliminary work on adverbial uses was done by
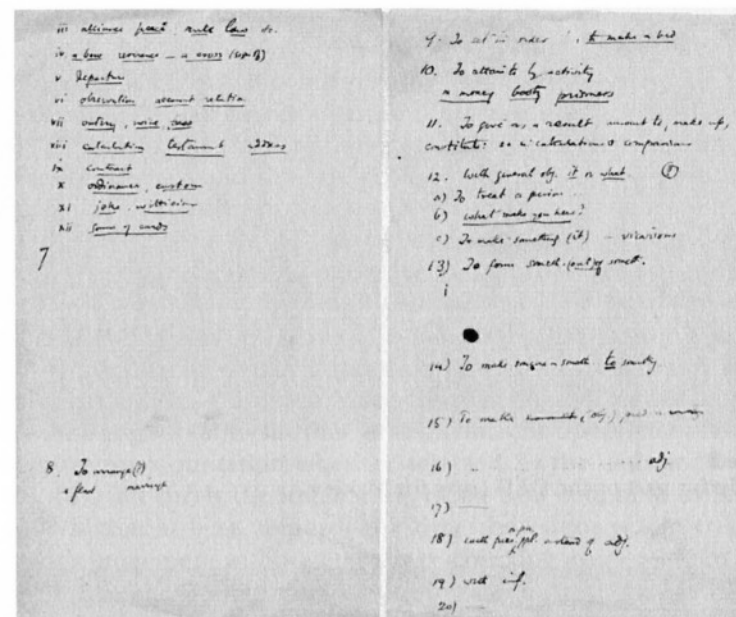
Figure 7
Preliminary notes by Charles Onions on the structure of the OED entry for **Make** *v*; from OED rejected slips, box 432.

Henry Bradley's daughter Eleanor. All of James Murray's children of course helped him with his dictionary work — in 1903 his daughters Elsie and Rosfrith were working as assistants in the Scriptorium — but it is perhaps less well known that Eleanor Bradley worked alongside her father for over 20 years, and continued as an assistant for nearly a decade after he died. For much of the time she seems to have played a clerical or supporting role — I think she "pre-processed" some batches of material for Bradley's other assistants — but the slips for *make* show that the "pre-processing" could include the writing of definitions, as her draft definitions survive for many of the adverbial uses of *make*. Figure 8 shows one of her topslips for *make up*; Onions has added a few words at the end, but neither he nor Bradley has changed the main part of her definition. She also drafted complete topslips for some of the smaller headwords in this range, including the noun *make-peace* (Figure 9) — although in this case someone, probably Onions, has added considerably to her definition, and substituted a different
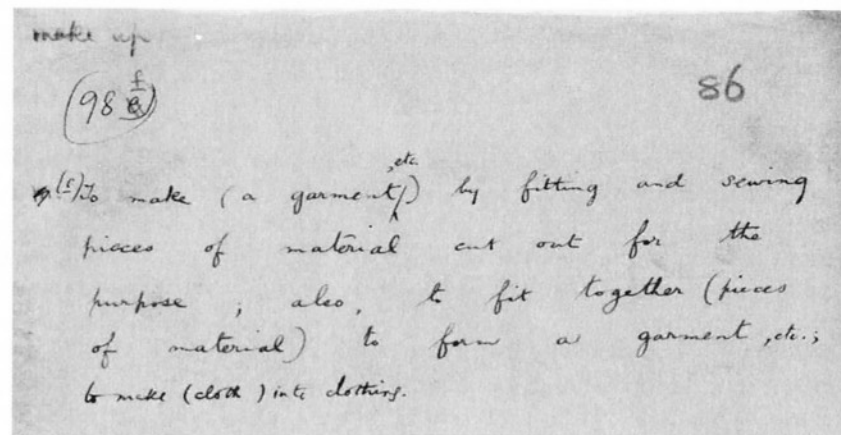
Figure 8
Topslip for part of the OED entry for **Make** v.
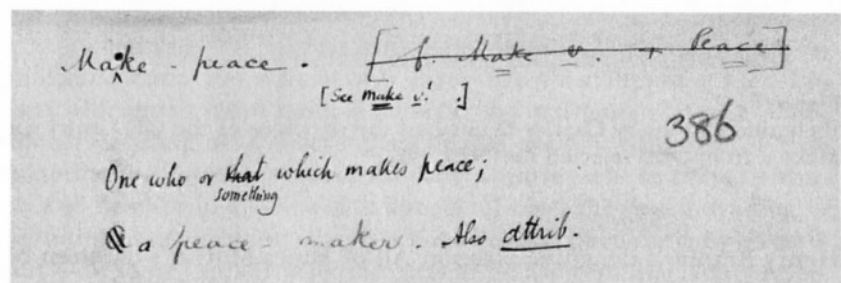
Figure 9
Topslip for the OED entry for **Make-peace**.

etymology. (Interestingly, it was only at proof stage that this etymology was completed: the published etymology gives a cross-reference to sense 9c of *make*, but on the topslip there is only a blank space, to be filled in later when the sense-numbering of the verb was unlikely to change.)

I have already referred to the fact that sub-editors made no selection of material. They were issued with a set of guidelines called "Directions to Sub-editors," of which a few copies survive; these include the stipulation that the sub-editor should "pin together [...] *all* the slips illustrating each meaning and construction, with a blank slip in

front to receive the definition."[5] The fact that it was the assistant who was actually the first to make a choice about which quotations to use, and which to leave out, is confirmed by Onions's description of editorial procedure, where he also mentions some of the criteria for selection: "[The assistant] tak[es] those [quotations] which best illustrate the different heads and intentions of a definition, or the phrases and grammatical constructions noted therein. He has to observe chronology by marking one quotation (at least) for each century" (1928, 15–16). We can see a passing reference to the process of rejecting quotations in a slip written by Onions himself in 1903 (see Figure 10). Against his definition for sense 3 of *lumpish* he has written a note to Bradley, pointing out that if more quotations are needed than the ones he has chosen, there are "many more good ones in the rejected." Now, Onions goes on to say that "it is incumbent upon [the editor] to scrutinize every quotation whether selected by the assistant or not" (1928, 16), but surely the implication of his own comment to Bradley in 1903 is that at least some of the time the editor would trust the assistant's judgement without actually re-checking every rejected slip.

While the quotation evidence for some items may have been over-plentiful, for others it was distinctly sparse. Onions mentions this as a problem: "The search for [quotations] [...] has always been a serious charge on the energies of the staff. Much of the toil of sifting and

Figure 10
Topslip for part of the OED entry for **Lumpish**.

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[5] "Directions to Sub-Editors" (OED archives, reference MISC/91/9), section 9.

collecting fresh material consists in the examination of the Old English and Middle English dictionaries, the glossaries to early texts, and the concordances to the Bible, Shakespeare, and other poets" (1928, 6). This is perhaps where the work of the OED staff in 1903 most differs from what we do in 2003: today we have instant word-by-word access to a huge corpus of English text of all periods, but 100 years ago it would take an enormous amount of work to fill out the documentary record of a word if the OED's own readers had not supplied enough quotations. Figure 11 shows how Arthur Maling has evidently gone to a Shakespeare concordance in order to fill out the paragraph of quotations for one sense of the adjective *pained*.

In fact, the scope available to assistants extended beyond quotation selection into the area of deciding which words were included in the dictionary at all. Of course, the first edition of the OED was not exhaustively inclusive: many words which the editors considered to be of marginal significance were omitted, in the knowledge that important omissions could be remedied in the anticipated supplement, published in 1933. The editors may have had final responsibility for deciding whether to include any given item, but again, the evidence of the slips shows that they relied heavily on the recommendations of their assistants. Figure 12 shows a relatively rare case of Murray overruling a

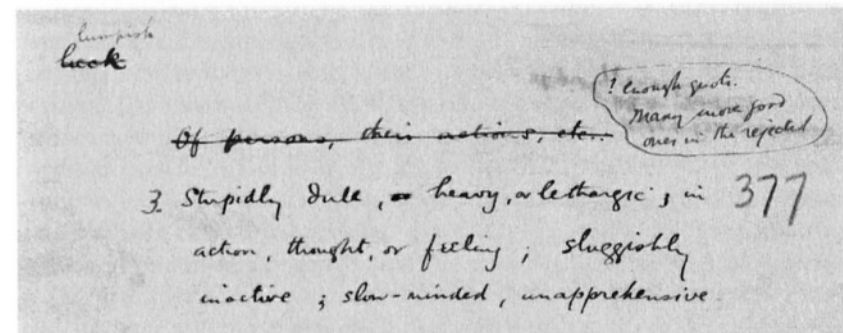**Figure 11**
Topslip for part of the OED entry for **Pained**.

Figure 12
Topslip for the OED entry for **Pampootie**.

recommendation from Arthur Maling that a word be omitted. In reviewing the topslip written by Henry Rope for the Irish dialect word *pampootie*, Maling has written "?omit"; but Murray has left the slips in the copy, and an entry for the word was subsequently printed. (The slip is interesting in another respect: at the bottom Rope, who at this stage is still "showing his reasoning" as a good trainee should, has recorded the fact that he renders the pronunciation as it is given in the *English Dialect Dictionary*.)

In the case of *pampootie* it is unclear what prompted Maling to suggest that the word might be omitted. In other cases the reason is clear enough. One category of word which was often omitted when the quotation evidence was thin is that of poorly established foreign borrowings. For example, the files of rejected slips in the OED archives contain a single eighteenth-century quotation reporting the use of the word *machacado* by Bolivian miners to denote a kind of silver ore, evidence which George Sykes assessed as not warranting inclusion: he has consequently marked the item "omit." Occasionally the grounds for omission are stated explicitly, as is the case with the word *Malacopterygii* (Figure 13). Taxonomic names constitute another marginal category, and are still generally excluded today unless there is evidence to show that they are in use as common nouns. Accordingly, although the sub-editor Joseph Brown supplied a topslip for *Malacopterygii*, accompanied by two supporting quotations, Sykes was prepared to mark the word as "L[atin]" and therefore something that could reasonably be omitted. Neither *machacado* nor *Malacopterygii* has subsequently been added to the OED.

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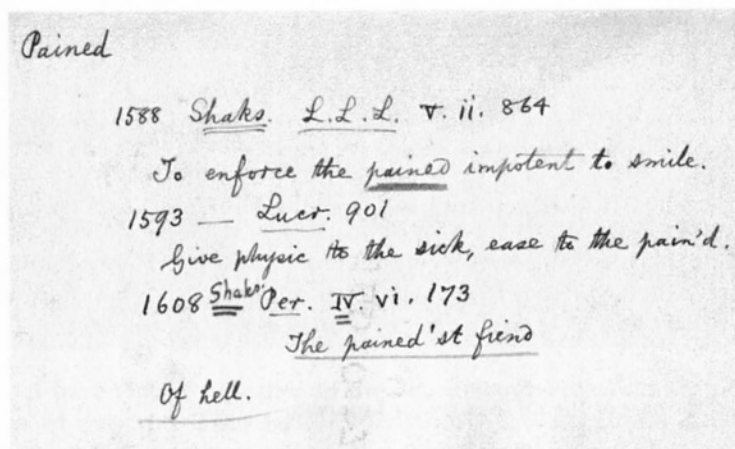assistants. Figure 12 shows a relatively rare case of Murray overruling a

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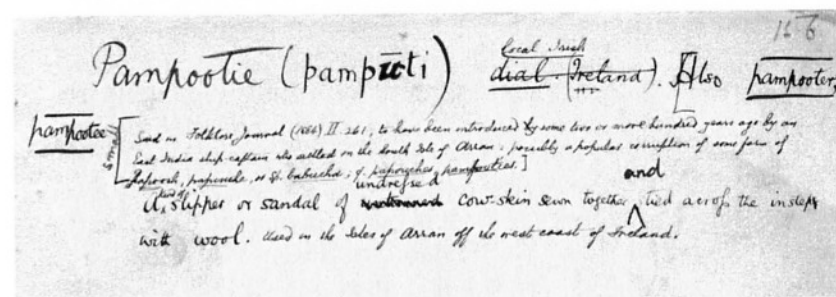Topslip for part of the OED entry for **Pained**.

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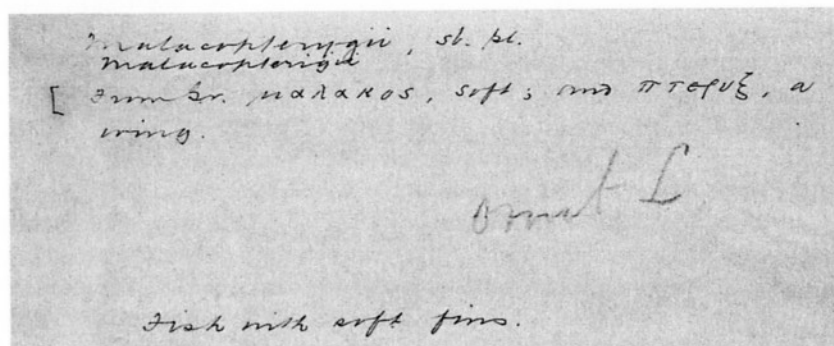added to the OED.

Figure 13
Sub-editor's topslip for *Malacopterygii*; from OED rejected slips, box 431.

On the other hand, the area of so-called nonce words is more unpredictable. Whatever quotation evidence there was in 1903 for the word *Mainiac* has not survived, but it seems likely that it illustrated the punning word for an inhabitant of the state of Maine. A topslip for *Mainiac*, written out by Eleanor Bradley, does survive (Figure 14), and has been marked for omission by James Dallas (a decision confirmed by Bradley, as the word did not appear in the first edition of the dictionary). However, what at one time appears to be utterly transitory,
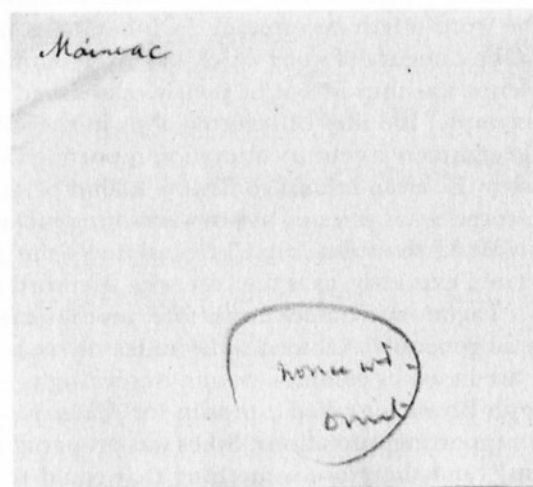
Figure 14
Draft topslip for *Mainiac*; from OED rejected slips, box 432.

something coined for the nonce, can quite easily become established: in 2000 an entry was published in OED Online for the word, listing three variant spellings (*Maine-ac*, *Maine-iac*, and *Mainiac*), and supported by five quotations.

Even editors much more experienced than Dallas could be proved wrong in judging whether a word's time had come. The fascicle containing the beginning of the letter R was published in July 1903, so I am going to allow myself to consider the omission of the word *radium*, even though William Craigie and his assistants had already reached the word *Rangy* by the end of 1902. At this stage, as mentioned earlier, Murray was still carefully looking over Craigie's slips; these included a draft entry for *radium*, with a single quotation from 1900. Murray allowed the entry to go to press, but on looking at the proof sheets, which he did in August 1902, he wrote to Craigie (see Figure 15) cautioning that — given that radium had only very recently been named

Figure 15
Letter 5 August 1902 from James Murray to William Craigie.

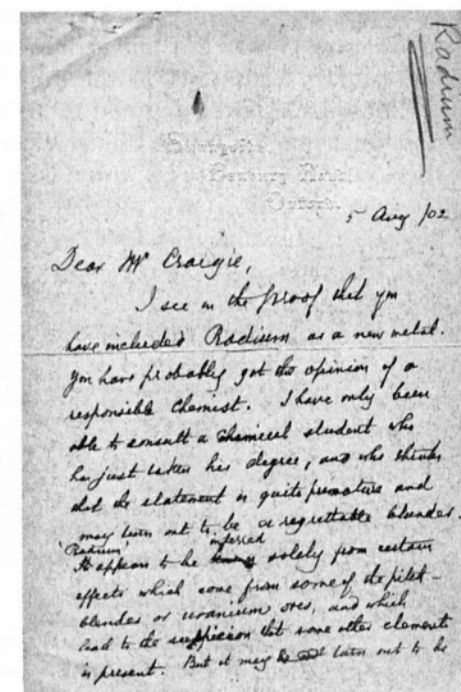as an *allegedly* new substance — if the dictionary were to state categorically that it was indeed a new metal this "may turn out to be a regrettable blunder": further experiments might show it to be something else entirely. Murray's letter goes on to point out that the name of another supposed new metal, namely *polonium*, is similarly problematic: at the time of this letter Murray was still working on the letter O, but he ends his letter "I certainly shall omit *Polonium* as at present advised." Craigie evidently took the point, as he published no entry for *radium*. As luck would have it, a consensus very soon emerged within the scientific community that both *radium* and *polonium* were indeed new elements, so that by the time Murray reached *polonium* he could include a suitable entry for the word, which was published in 1907.

It seems that the question of whether to omit *radium* became the subject of some discussion among the rest of the Oxford staff, and even of amusement: an elaborate spoof entry for the word has survived in the OED archives. The author of this spoof, an assistant by the name of Henry Bayliss, had been on Bradley's staff since 1891. He was the son of an Oxford gardener, and like many of the assistants — not to mention Murray and Bradley — was not university-educated. In fact Bradley gave an extraordinary testimonial to the work of Bayliss and his colleague Wilfrid Lewis in a letter he wrote in 1905: "Although they are engaged chiefly in what may be called the lower departments of the work, I believe the loss of either of them would be a calamity more irreparable than would be the loss of any other assistant."[6] By "lower departments" Bradley seems to mean that Bayliss spent much of his time working on particular quotations, either verifying them in the Bodleian Library, or doing research to seek out additional quotations; but he was sometimes given small ranges of whole entries to work on like the other assistants. Figure 16 shows some of his work on the relatively straightforward word *lukewarm*: the fact that Bradley has not made any alterations to any of the text on these slips is an indication of how much an editor could rely on his assistants to get the text right first time.

Just how thoroughly familiar Bayliss was with the OED is, however, clear from his spoof entry for *radium* (see Figure 17). Only some-

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[6]Letter 29 November 1905 from Henry Bradley to Charles Cannan, Secretary to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press (OED archives, reference PP/1905/50).

Figure 16
Topslips for the OED entry for **Lukewarm**.

Figure 17
Henry Bayliss's spoof entry for *Radium* (OED archives, reference MISC/448/3).

one with intimate knowledge of how dictionary entries were put together could have crafted such a careful and affectionate parody: for example, the fictitious languages in the etymology, like Prehistoric and Old High Hashemite, are given "standard" abbreviations, and the quotations — from Chaucer's "Dustman's Tale," from Pepys's diary, from Goldsmith's "The *Inhabited* Village" — indicate the thoroughness of his knowledge of which sources were most regularly cited. I am glad to say that this is not the only evidence of Bayliss's sense of humour in the archives; but quite apart from its entertainment value, it does provide a vivid illustration of the assistants' depth of engagement with the work of compiling the dictionary.

The slips surviving from 1903 contain evidence for many other words which the editors decided to omit. My best estimate, based on the first 100 pages of the letter M as eventually published, is that for each page there are on average at least two items omitted before the proof stage, in spite of the availability of quotation evidence of some sort. Most of these fall into categories such as those already mentioned: either they were foreign words for which there was no convincing evidence of naturalization or they were excessively technical. For many items, the only evidence is a listing of the lemma in another dictionary. With the passage of time, of course, we can now review the decision to omit a word; in general, of the words which were omitted, those which now seem more significant have in fact already been added. Thus Bradley's omission of *mamba* (the African snake) in 1903 might seem surprising given that there were four quotation slips available to him, but the omission was made good in 1933 by the inclusion of an entry for the word in the supplement. And, of course, with on-line publication, the OED is now in a position to act promptly in respect of any omission which becomes significant.

The work carried out by the assistants in 1903 included many tasks in addition to those described here. Several of them spent an enormous amount of time verifying quotations; Onions emphasized that it was often unsafe to rely on quotations as they were given by other people, even in published and supposedly authoritative texts such as Johnson's dictionary (1928, 16). The compilation of the lists of variant spellings at the head of most entries was in itself a laborious task involving the reading of all the hundreds or even thousands of quotations for the word in question. And only brief mention has been made of the work done by the editorial staff — frequently in consultation with others — on etymologies and pronunciations, or

bibliographical standardization. Some of the more trusted assistants also helped out at the proof-reading stage: in March 1903, when Craigie was in need of some extra help in this regard, Murray suggested that "Mr Maling could do a few *Revises* (at which he is specially good)."[7] And all this only relates to those alphabetical ranges which were actually being prepared for press: material for future letters was also being sent out to sub-editors — in 1903 sub-edited material in S and T was returned to Oxford by Joseph Brown and others — and new batches of quotations from freshly published books continued to arrive. If we bear in mind that all of these activities were going on at the same time, a rather busier picture emerges of life in the Old Ashmolean and the Scriptorium than that suggested by the "dusty workshops" and "brown studies" of Tolkien's description.

Just how much the editors appreciated the work of their assistants is recorded in a speech given by Sir William Craigie on 6 June 1928, at the great dinner held in Goldsmiths' Hall to celebrate the completion of the first edition of the OED. In paying tribute to the assistants, he says: "They will agree with me, I know, when I express the wish that we could give an exhibition of how the Dictionary has actually been made, — how the long stretches of raw material on the shelves have gradually passed through the various hands, until they reached the stage of printer's copy, proofs, revises, and finished sheets. [...] When you look at the preface to any letter of the alphabet, and see there the names of the staff who assisted in the preparation of it, you may rest assured that these names represent a mass of patient, honest, careful work, and of special knowledge, without which the editors could have done but a small part of whatever they may have achieved."[8] I hope that this brief snapshot has at least given an impression of these men and women, and some of the large and small ways in which they shaped the text of the OED.

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[7]Letter 26 March 1903 from James Murray to William Craigie (OED archives, reference MISC/12/28).

[8]Taken from a privately printed copy of the speeches delivered in Goldsmiths' Hall, kept in the OED library.

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Intelligent Elasticity: The Early Years of the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*

Elizabeth Knowles

Kenneth Sisam was intimately involved in planning the venerable *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (ODQ), first as Assistant Secretary to the Delegates of the Oxford University Press (OUP) in the 1930s and, between 1942 and 1948, as Secretary. Agreement on the best method by which to compile the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* was reached after considerable debate at the press. Sisam identified the essential editorial quality of such a work: he called it "intelligent elasticity." Through the debate his view prevailed and led the ODQ to success, expressed today, not only in ODQ itself, but also in later Oxford quotations dictionaries (most recently, Knowles 2002, Ratcliffe 2002, and Kemp 2003).

The *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* was first published in 1941, two years after the outbreak of the Second World War. This may seem sufficiently remote from the present day, but, in fact, ODQ was originally conceived during the First War. In 1915, R. M. Leonard, one of the London editors, wrote to Humphrey Milford, Publisher from 1913 to 1945, in charge of the London Office of the OUP and what we would now call the "trade" (as distinct from the "academic") side of the press: "What do you think of an Oxford Dictionary of Poetry Quotations (not foreign quotations), based on Oxford texts and the